

WINTER DAYS



Mount Olympus by Lear, Metropolitan Museum of Art

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In The Cold And Quiet North

by Robert Nathan, from the Internet Archive etext of *Youth Grows Old*

So, on a night in winter, with a black wind moving
In solemn tide among incredible stars,
I climbed the long road that led up the hill.
Dark branches bent above me disapproving,

The spacious night was still.
No far sound broke
The frosty silence and the black wind moving.
The hushed voices of the snowy meadows

Crept through the pasture bars.
I topped the hill. One lantern there awoke.
A lonely cottage, and the fields were wide
In a dark, breathless sea. The road went by,

The great wind smote and wrestled with my stride.
And my heart spoke.
"Here," said my heart, "Now winter is at home.
You are not welcome at his fireside."

On A Railway Platform

The Project Gutenberg eBook, *Collected Poems*, by Alfred Noyes

A drizzle of drifting rain
And a blurred white lamp o'erhead,
That shines as my love will shine again
In the world of the dead.

Round me the wet black night,
And, afar in the limitless gloom,
Crimson and green, two blossoms of light,
Two stars of doom.

But the night of death is aflame
With a torch of back-blown fire,
And the coal-black depths of the quivering air
Rend for my soul's desire.

Leap, heart, for the pulse and the roar
And the lights of the streaming train
That leaps with the heart of thy love once more
Out of the mist and the rain.

Out of the desolate years
The thundering pageant flows;
But I see no more than a window of tears
Which her face has turned to a rose.

Sorrow Of Departure. _For D._

The Project Gutenberg EBook of *Orchard and Vineyard*, by
Victoria Mary (Vita) Sackville-West

HE sat among the shadows lost,
And heard the careless voice speak on
Of life when he was gone from home,
Of days that he had made his own,
Familiar schemes that he had known,
And dates that he had cherished most
As star-points in the year to come,
And he was suddenly alone,
Thinking (not bitterly,
But with a grave regret) that he
Was in that room a ghost.

He sat among the shades apart,
The careless voice he scarcely heard.
In that arrested hour there stirred
Shy birds of beauty in his heart.

The clouds of March he would not see
Across the sky race royally,
Nor yet the drift of daffodil
He planted with so glad a hand,
Nor yet the loveliness he planned
For summer's sequence to fulfil,
Nor trace upon the hill
The annual waking of the land,
Nor meditative stand
To watch the turning of the mill.

He would not pause above the Weald
With twilight falling dim,
And mark the chequer-board of field,
The water gleaming like a shield,
The oast-house in the elms concealed,
Nor see, from heaven's chalice-rim,
The vintaged sunset brim,
Nor yet the high, suspended star
Hanging eternally afar.

These things would be, but not for him.

At summer noon he would not lie
One with his cutter's rise and dip,
Free with the wind and sea and sky,

And watch the dappled waves go by,
The sea-gulls scream and slip;
White sails, white birds, white clouds, white foam,
White cliffs that curled the love of home
Around him like a whip....
He would not see that summer noon
Fade into dusk from light,
While he on shifting waters bright
Sailed idly on, beneath the moon
Climbing the dome of night.

This was his dream of happy things
That he had loved through many springs,
And never more might know.
But man must pass the shrouded gate
Companioned by his secret fate,
And he must lonely go,
And none can help or understand,
For other men may touch his hand,
But none the soul below.

Written On White Frost

The Project Gutenberg EBook of *The Garden of Bright Waters*, by Various
Trans by E P Mathers

The white frost covers all the arbute-trees,
Like powder on the faces of women.

Looking from window consider
That a man without women is like a flower
Naked without its leaves.

To drive away my bitterness

I write this thought with my narrowed breath
On the white frost.

From the Chinese of Wang Chi (sixth and seventh centuries).

Winter Is Coming

by Waverley Turner Carmichael
The Project Gutenberg EBook of *The Book of American Negro Poetry*

De winter days are drawin' nigh
An' by the fire I sets an' sigh;
De nothe'n win' is blowin' cold,
Like it done in days of old.

De yaller leafs are fallin' fas',
Fur summer days is been an' pas';
The air is blowin' mighty cold,
Like it done in days of old.

De frost is fallin' on de gras'
An' seem to say "Dis is yo' las"--
De air is blowin' mighty cold
Like it done in days of old.

The Rosy Hearth, The Lamplight's Narrow Beam

The Project Gutenberg EBook of *Poems* of Paul Verlaine, trans by Gertrude Hall

The rosy hearth, the lamplight's narrow beam,
The meditation that is rather dream,
With looks that lose themselves in cherished looks;
The hour of steaming tea and banished books;
The sweetness of the evening at an end,
The dear fatigue, and right to rest attained,
And worshipped expectation of the night,--
Oh, all these things, in unrelenting flight,
My dream pursues through all the vain delays,
Impatient of the weeks, mad at the days!

The Wind

The Project Gutenberg EBook of *The Defence of Guenevere and Other Poems*, by William Morris

Ah! no, no, it is nothing, surely nothing at all,
Only the wild-going wind round by the garden-wall,
For the dawn just now is breaking, the wind beginning to fall.

_Wind, wind! thou art sad, art thou kind?
Wind, wind, unhappy! thou art blind,
Yet still thou wanderest the lily-seed to find._

So I will sit, and think and think of the days gone by,
Never moving my chair for fear the dogs should cry,
Making no noise at all while the flambeau burns awry.

For my chair is heavy and carved, and with sweeping green behind
It is hung, and the dragons thereon grin out in the gusts of the wind;
On its folds an orange lies, with a deep gash cut in the rind.

_Wind, wind! thou art sad, art thou kind?
Wind, wind, unhappy! thou art blind,
still thou wanderest the lily-seed to find._

If I move my chair it will scream, and the orange will roll out afar,
And the faint yellow juice ooze out like blood from a wizard's jar;
And the dogs will howl for those who went last month to the war.

_Wind, wind! thou art sad, art thou kind?
Wind, wind, unhappy! thou art blind,
Yet still thou wanderest the lily-seed to find._

So I will sit and think of love that is over and past,
O, so long ago! Yes, I will be quiet at last:
Whether I like it or not, a grim half-slumber is cast

Over my worn old brains, that touches the roots of my heart,
And above my half-shut eyes, the blue roof 'gins to part,
And show the blue spring sky, till I am ready to start

From out of the green-hung chair; but something keeps me still,
And I fall in a dream that I walk'd with her on the side of a hill,
Dotted, for was it not spring? with tufts of the daffodil.

_Wind, wind! thou art sad, art thou kind?
Wind, wind, unhappy! thou art blind,
Yet still thou wanderest the lily-seed to find._

And Margaret as she walk'd held a painted book in her hand;
Her finger kept the place; I caught her, we both did stand
Face to face, on the top of the highest hill in the land.

_Wind, wind! thou art sad, art thou kind?
Wind, wind, unhappy! thou art blind,
Yet still thou wanderest the lily-seed to find._

I held to her long bare arms, but she shudder'd away from me,
While the flush went out of her face as her head fell back on a tree,
And a spasm caught her mouth, fearful for me to see;

And still I held to her arms till her shoulder touched my mail,
Weeping she totter'd forward, so glad that I should prevail,
And her hair went over my robe, like a gold flag over a sail.

_Wind, wind! thou art sad, art thou kind?
Wind, wind, unhappy! thou art blind,
Yet still thou wanderest the lily-seed to find._

I kiss'd her hard by the ear, and she kiss'd me on the brow,
And then lay down on the grass, where the mark on the moss is now,
And spread her arms out wide while I went down below.

_Wind, wind! thou art sad, art thou kind?
Wind, wind, unhappy! thou art blind,
Yet still thou wanderest the lily-seed to find._

And then I walk'd for a space to and fro on the side of the hill,
Till I gather'd and held in my arms great sheaves of the daffodil,
And when I came again my Margaret lay there still.

I piled them high and high above her heaving breast,
How they were caught and held in her loose ungirded vest!
But one beneath her arm died, happy so to be prest!

_Wind, wind! thou art sad, art thou kind?
Wind, wind, unhappy! thou art blind,
Yet still thou wanderest the lily-seed to find._

Again I turn'd my back and went away for an hour;
She said no word when I came again, so, flower by flower,
I counted the daffodils over, and cast them languidly lower.

_Wind, wind! thou art sad, art thou kind?
Wind, wind, unhappy! thou art blind,
Yet still thou wanderest the lily-seed to find._

My dry hands shook and shook as the green gown show'd again,
Clear'd from the yellow flowers, and I grew hollow with pain,
And on to us both there fell from the sun-shower drops of rain.

_Wind, wind! thou art sad, art thou kind?
Wind, wind, unhappy! thou art blind,
Yet still thou wanderest the lily-seed to find._

Alas! alas! there was blood on the very quiet breast,
Blood lay in the many folds of the loose ungirded vest,
Blood lay upon her arm where the flower had been prest.

I shriek'd and leapt from my chair, and the orange roll'd out afar,
The faint yellow juice oozed out like blood from a wizard's jar;
And then in march'd the ghosts of those that had gone to the war.

I knew them by the arms that I was used to paint
Upon their long thin shields; but the colours were all grown faint,
And faint upon their banner was Olaf, king and saint.

_Wind, wind! thou art sad, art thou kind?
Wind, wind, unhappy! thou art blind,
Yet still thou wanderest the lily-seed to find._

XXXIV.

Project Gutenberg's *Poems: Three Series, Complete*, by Emily Dickinson

What inn is this
Where for the night
Peculiar traveller comes?
Who is the landlord?
Where the maids?
Behold, what curious rooms!
No ruddy fires on the hearth,
No brimming tankards flow.
Necromancer, landlord,
Who are these below?

When The Coal House's Full.

The Project Gutenberg EBook of *The Old Hanging Fork and Other Poems*, by
George W. Doneghy

When the nights are gittin' chilly and the leaves begin to fade,
An' the mercury's down to thirty, 'stead o' ninety in the shade,
There's a happy kind o' feelin' takes possession o' the soul--
With the smoke house full o' middlin', and the coal house full o' coal!

When the wintry winds are whistlin' through the branches o' the trees,
An' the dead leaves are a-flyin' and a-rustlin' in the breeze,
You kin feel the vast contentment that over you will roll--
If the barn is full o' fodder, and the coal house full o' coal!

When the 'skeeter's ceased from troublin' and the fly is chilled to death,
An' the window-pane is written with the Frost King's icy breath,
You kin dream about the Summer-time, an' that old fishin' pole--
If the pantry's full o' victuals, an' the coal house full o' coal!

When your supper's been digested an' you're dozin' in your chair,
Or you're tucked between the blankets from the frosty, nippin' air,
Why, your dreams will be the sweeter if you've helped some sufferin' soul
Whose larder's scant o' victuals, and his coal house minus coal!

The Wind In A Frolic

by William Howitt.

Project Gutenberg's *The Cambridge Book of Poetry for Children*, by Various

The wind one morning sprang up from sleep,
Saying, "Now for a frolic! now for a leap!
Now for a madcap galloping chase!
I'll make a commotion in every place!"
So it swept with a bustle right through a great town,
Creaking the signs and scattering down
Shutters; and whisking, with merciless squalls,
Old women's bonnets and gingerbread stalls.
There never was heard a much lustier shout,
As the apples and oranges trundled about;
And the urchins, that stand with their thievish eyes
For ever on watch, ran off each with a prize.

Then away to the field it went blustering and humming,
And the cattle all wondered whatever was coming.
It plucked by their tails the grave matronly cows,
And tossed the colts' manes all about their brows,
Till, offended at such a familiar salute,
They all turned their backs, and stood sullenly mute.
So on it went, capering and playing its pranks;
Whistling with reeds on the broad river's banks;
Puffing the birds as they sat on the spray,
Or the traveller grave on the king's highway.
It was not too nice[1] to hustle the bags
Of the beggar, and flutter his dirty rags;
'Twas so bold that it feared not to play its joke
With the doctor's wig, or the gentleman's cloak.
Through the forest it roared, and cried gaily, "Now,
You sturdy old oaks, I'll make you bow!"
And it made them bow without more ado,
Or it cracked their great branches through and through.

Then it rushed like a monster on cottage and farm,
Striking their dwellers with sudden alarm;
And they ran out like bees in a midsummer swarm.
There were dames with their kerchiefs tied over their caps,
To see if their poultry were free from mishaps;
The turkeys they gobbled, the geese screamed aloud,
And the hens crept to roost in a terrified crowd;
There was rearing of ladders, and logs laying on
Where the thatch from the roof threatened soon to be gone.
But the wind had passed on, and had met in a lane
With a schoolboy, who panted and struggled in vain;
For it tossed him and twirled him, then passed, and he stood

With his hat in a pool and his shoe in the mud.

But away went the wind in its holiday glee,
And now it was far on the billowy sea,
And the lordly ships felt its staggering blow,
And the little boats darted to and fro.
But lo! it was night, and it sank to rest,
On the sea-bird's rock in the gleaming West,
Laughing to think, in its fearful fun,
How little of mischief it had done.

The Bonfire

The Project Gutenberg EBook of *Mountain Interval*, by Robert Frost

"Oh, let's go up the hill and scare ourselves,
As reckless as the best of them to-night,
By setting fire to all the brush we piled
With pitchy hands to wait for rain or snow.
Oh, let's not wait for rain to make it safe.
The pile is ours: we dragged it bough on bough
Down dark converging paths between the pines.
Let's not care what we do with it to-night.
Divide it? No! But burn it as one pile
The way we piled it. And let's be the talk
Of people brought to windows by a light
Thrown from somewhere against their wall-paper.
Rouse them all, both the free and not so free
With saying what they'd like to do to us
For what they'd better wait till we have done.
Let's all but bring to life this old volcano,
If that is what the mountain ever was--
And scare ourselves. Let wild fire loose we will...."

"And scare you too?" the children said together.

"Why wouldn't it scare me to have a fire
Begin in smudge with ropy smoke and know
That still, if I repent, I may recall it,
But in a moment not: a little spurt
Of burning fatness, and then nothing but
The fire itself can put it out, and that
By burning out, and before it burns out
It will have roared first and mixed sparks with stars,
And sweeping round it with a flaming sword,
Made the dim trees stand back in wider circle--
Done so much and I know not how much more
I mean it shall not do if I can bind it.
Well if it doesn't with its draft bring on
A wind to blow in earnest from some quarter,
As once it did with me upon an April.
The breezes were so spent with winter blowing
They seemed to fail the bluebirds under them
Short of the perch their languid flight was toward;
And my flame made a pinnacle to heaven
As I walked once round it in possession.
But the wind out of doors--you know the saying.
There came a gust. You used to think the trees
Made wind by fanning since you never knew
It blow but that you saw the trees in motion.

Something or someone watching made that gust.
It put the flame tip-down and dabbed the grass
Of over-winter with the least tip-touch
Your tongue gives salt or sugar in your hand.
The place it reached to blackened instantly.
The black was all there was by day-light,
That and the merest curl of cigarette smoke--
And a flame slender as the hepaticas,
Blood-root, and violets so soon to be now.
But the black spread like black death on the ground,
And I think the sky darkened with a cloud
Like winter and evening coming on together.
There were enough things to be thought of then.
Where the field stretches toward the north
And setting sun to Hyla brook, I gave it
To flames without twice thinking, where it verges
Upon the road, to flames too, though in fear
They might find fuel there, in withered brake,
Grass its full length, old silver golden-rod,
And alder and grape vine entanglement,
To leap the dusty deadline. For my own
I took what front there was beside. I knelt
And thrust hands in and held my face away.
Fight such a fire by rubbing not by beating.
A board is the best weapon if you have it.
I had my coat. And oh, I knew, I knew,
And said out loud, I couldn't bide the smother
And heat so close in; but the thought of all
The woods and town on fire by me, and all
The town turned out to fight for me--that held me.
I trusted the brook barrier, but feared
The road would fail; and on that side the fire
Died not without a noise of crackling wood--
Of something more than tinder-grass and weed--
That brought me to my feet to hold it back
By leaning back myself, as if the reins
Were round my neck and I was at the plough.
I won! But I'm sure no one ever spread
Another color over a tenth the space
That I spread coal-black over in the time
It took me. Neighbors coming home from town
Couldn't believe that so much black had come there
While they had backs turned, that it hadn't been there
When they had passed an hour or so before
Going the other way and they not seen it.
They looked about for someone to have done it.
But there was no one. I was somewhere wondering
Where all my weariness had gone and why
I walked so light on air in heavy shoes

In spite of a scorched Fourth-of-July feeling.
Why wouldn't I be scared remembering that?"

"If it scares you, what will it do to us?"

"Scare you. But if you shrink from being scared,
What would you say to war if it should come?
That's what for reasons I should like to know--
If you can comfort me by any answer."

"Oh, but war's not for children--it's for men."

"Now we are digging almost down to China.
My dears, my dears, you thought that--we all thought it.
So your mistake was ours. Haven't you heard, though,
About the ships where war has found them out
At sea, about the towns where war has come
Through opening clouds at night with droning speed
Further o'erhead than all but stars and angels,--
And children in the ships and in the towns?
Haven't you heard what we have lived to learn?
Nothing so new--something we had forgotten:
_ War is for everyone, for children too _
I wasn't going to tell you and I mustn't.
The best way is to come up hill with me
And have our fire and laugh and be afraid."

A Winter Ride

The Project Gutenberg EBook of *A Dome of Many-Coloured Glass*, by Amy Lowell

Who shall declare the joy of the running!
Who shall tell of the pleasures of flight!
Springing and spurning the tufts of wild heather,
Sweeping, wide-winged, through the blue dome of light.
Everything mortal has moments immortal,
Swift and God-gifted, immeasurably bright.

So with the stretch of the white road before me,
Shining snowcrystals rainbowed by the sun,
Fields that are white, stained with long, cool, blue shadows,
Strong with the strength of my horse as we run.
Joy in the touch of the wind and the sunlight!
Joy! With the vigorous earth I am one.

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